

Cunland (phonetic) of a Rhode Island hospital reported that concussions without fractures can be caused by helmets. These can lead to massive internal head swelling and paralysis or even death. Rhode Island had a 167.7 percent increase in motorcycle related fatalities after putting a mandatory helmet law into effect. (Inaudible) drivers and passengers, even those wearing seat belts, suffer a far greater number of head injuries than motorcyclists, yet no one is suggesting they wear helmets, but get the word out and they probably will. Neck injuries and fatalities in New York State jumped 75 percent the year the state's helmet law went into effect. In New Jersey motorcycle deaths soared 340 percent after a helmet law was passed. Temperatures can reach 130 inside a full coverage helmet. Heat related factors contributing to accident and deaths include fatigue, nausea, light-headedness, blurred vision, loss of visual perception and fairting. I had a letter from a veterinarian in my district who is a biker that said in the summertime when it is so hot, he does wear helmets off an on, he refuses to wear one because he sweats so much that the perspiration gets down over his face and his eyes and it blurs it.

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR PETERSON: A study by the Utah Highway Safety Department shows that helmet usage does not significantly effect the severity of head injuries. California Highway Patrol statistics show that motorcyclists voluntarily use helmets 50 percent of the time, auto drivers voluntarily use seat belts 20 percent of the time, and auto drivers in seat belt law states use belts 45 percent of the time. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment report that it could find no evidence of increased motorcycle fatalities after they repealed the Kansas helmet law. Testing at the University of Technology at Stutenberg, (phonetic) Sweden estimated that the helmets slide only two-thousandths of an inch before grabbing, thus such sudden stopping at the helmet twists the head and may cause the brain to move inside the skull, rupturing arteries and causing permanent brain damage. I just thought those were some very interesting statistics, too. I will not disagree with Senator Lynch in regards to helmets or seat belts, but I will not support passage of this bill or any mandatory on seat belts or any of that type of that legislation. I think it is up to the individual and also I think we need to increase education.